

Resolution # 5—Memorial Requiring Two Thirds Majority on Rostering Proposal

WHEREAS, the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted “to direct the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and to make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church;” and

WHEREAS, the Constitutional and Legal Committee of the ELCA Church Council recommended that “any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church’s current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption;” and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council voted 19-10 to delete this provision and is recommending rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which would require only a simple majority vote to change ELCA standards to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender sexual relationships; and

WHEREAS, a two-thirds majority vote is usually required for major decisions including the adoption of an ELCA social statement and for amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws, so that such decisions will be accepted by the entire church as legitimate; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando in 2005 required a two-thirds majority vote for a similar decision and this was widely accepted as a legitimate requirement; and

WHEREAS, a decision to change church teaching and policy to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender sexual relationships holds the potential to be very divisive in many ELCA synods and congregations and to cause both membership and financial losses for synods and congregations; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will adopt its rules for the assembly and could set a two-thirds majority for adoption of any changes to standards for pastors and other rostered leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to add the following provision to the rules of procedure for the assembly: “Any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this Church’s current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption.”

Rev. Richard Mathisen, Rev. Dr. Paul Sorcek, Rev. Dr. Michael Tavella, Rev. Mary Konopka, and Rev. Nancy Wiseman

Because the rules of the Church wide Assembly will be determined before Synodical Memorials are considered, a memorial to the Assembly, while expressing the will of the Southeast Pennsylvania Assembly, may not have the desired effect. To give the resolution the effect the proposers desire, if adopted, **the Committee on Reference and Counsel, with the concurrence of the proposers recommends amendment of the resolution, as follows:**

The title of the resolution shall be Resolution Requiring Two Thirds Majority on Rostering Proposal. The resolution shall be amended to read:

Therefore be it RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly recommends that the ELCA Church Council add the following provision to the rules of procedure for the Assembly: "Any motion to come before the Church wide Assembly regarding changes in this church's current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the Assembly for adoption." Further, the Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends debate of the proposal as amended, and makes no recommendation concerning adoption.